

ISLAM

Pride is at the root of all injustice

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

“Evil can have no beginning but from pride nor any end but from humility.”

When the English author William Law (1686-1761) wrote these words, he placed them in an ethical context. But they could well be interpreted in a spiritual sense, for the most sinful attitude that man can adopt before God is one of pride.

Other sins may be forgivable, but for pride there is no forgiveness.

Pride, whether overt or covert, is at the root of all the wrongs and injustice perpetrated by man. It is pride, which prevents the wrongdoer from acknowledging his guilt: to do so, would detract from his personal status. He forgets that in denying, or ignoring what is true, he places himself above truth.

It is folly to do so, for truth rides high, far and above everything and everyone else in this world.

There is no mortal creature who can take precedence over it.

It is only the individual who lives out his life in consonance with the true nature of things who will receive God's blessings.

To attain to this state of blessedness, he must realize that truth transcends all, and that he should bow before it. But those who are puffed up with a sense of their own importance are seldom capable of doing so. Instead of bowing before truth, they want truth to bow before them.

Instead of living in harmony with reality, they demand that reality should harmonise with their wishes.

This is as unrealistic as it is egoistic, for things can never happen in this way in the world. The perpetually proud man – without his ever realising it – is doomed to moral bankruptcy and can never find favour in the eyes of God.